BULLETIN
of the
Chicago Herpetological Society

Volume 45, Number 11
November 2010

BULLETIN OF THE CHICAGO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Volume 45, Number 11
November 2010

Notes on the Herpetofauna of Western Mexico 3: Herpetofauna Sympatric with *Xantusia sanchezi* in an Oak Forest of Jalisco, Mexico . . . . . Daniel Cruz-Sáenz and David Lazcano 173

Alligator Farms in the Workplace: A Guide for Beginners . . . . . Gary Fogel 177

What You Missed at the October Meeting 179

Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, October 15, 2010 183

Advertisements 184

News and Announcements 184

Cover: Photograph by Gary Fogel illustrating "Alligator Farms in the Workplace."

STAFF

Editor: Michael A. Dloogatch—mdloogatch@chicagoherp.org
Advertising Manager: Ralph Shepstone

2010 CHS Board of Directors

John Archer, President
Linda Malawy, Vice-President
Andy Malawy, Treasurer
Cindy Rampacek, Recording Secretary
Deb Krohn, Corresponding Secretary
Aaron LaForge, Publications Secretary
Mike Dloogatch, Membership Secretary
Dick Buchholz, Sergeant-at-Arms
Jim Foster, Member-at-Large
Lawrence Huddleston, Member-at-Large
Jessica Tschampa, Member-at-Large
Jenny Vollman, Member-at-Large

The Chicago Herpetological Society is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois. Its purposes are education, conservation and the advancement of herpetology. Meetings are announced in this publication, and are normally held at 7:30 P.M., the last Wednesday of each month.

Membership in the CHS includes a subscription to the monthly *Bulletin*. Annual dues are: Individual Membership, $25.00; Family Membership, $28.00; Sustaining Membership, $50.00; Contributing Membership, $100.00; Institutional Membership, $38.00. Remittance must be made in U.S. funds. Subscribers outside the U.S. must add $12.00 for postage. Send membership dues or address changes to: Chicago Herpetological Society, Membership Secretary, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago, IL 60614.

Manuscripts published in the *Bulletin of the Chicago Herpetological Society* are not peer reviewed. Manuscripts should be submitted to the editor as email attachments, or on IBM PC-compatible or Macintosh format diskettes or CDs. Alternatively, manuscripts may be submitted in duplicate, typewritten and double spaced. Manuscripts and letters concerning editorial business should be sent to: Chicago Herpetological Society, Publications Secretary, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago, IL 60614. **Back issues** are limited but are available from the Publications Secretary for $2.50 per issue postpaid.

Visit the CHS home page at <http://www.Chicagoherp.org>.

The *Bulletin of the Chicago Herpetological Society* (ISSN 0009-3564) is published monthly by the Chicago Herpetological Society, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago IL 60614. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago IL. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to: Chicago Herpetological Society, Membership Secretary, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago IL 60614.

Copyright © 2010

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 45(11):173-176, 2010

Notes on the Herpetofauna of Western Mexico 3: Herpetofauna Sympatric with *Xantusia sanchezi* in an Oak Forest of Jalisco, Mexico

Daniel Cruz-Sáenz and David Lazcano
Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León
Facultad de Ciencias Biológicas, Laboratorio de Herpetología
Apartado Postal - 513
San Nicolás de los Garza, Nuevo León, C. P. 66450
MEXICO
dcruzsaenz@hotmail.com

Abstract

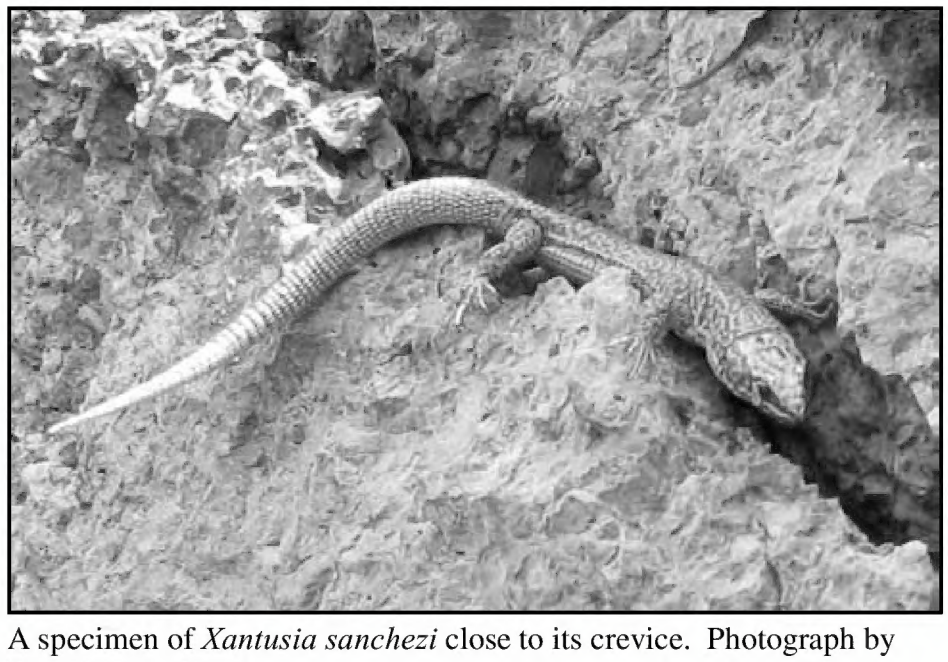
There are 14 species recognized in the North American genus *Xantusia*. Six of these occur in Mexico. Two species of the genus, *X. bolsonae* and *X. sanchezi*, are categorized by the Mexican government as "at risk of extinction" (SEMARNAT, 2002). Little is known about the biology, ecology, and the current status of the disjunct populations of these two species. Sanchez's night lizard, *Xantusia sanchezi*, is the southernmost species and is known from southern Zacatecas and central Jalisco. This species was described by Bezy and Flores-Villela (1999) from the locality of Moyahua, Zacatecas. While conducting a population ecology study of *X. sanchezi*, we surveyed the other herpetofauna at the sampling site. We found a total of 24 sympatric species. We categorized nine of these as possible predator species of *X. sanchezi* based on documented saurophagy.

Resumen

Existen 14 especies reconocidas en el género *Xantusia*, con una distribución en América del Norte, 6 especies tienen una distribución en México. Dos especies de este género se indican en la norma Mexicana NOM-059-ECOL-2001 (SEMARNAT, 2002) en una categoría de conservación "en peligro de extinción." Hay una falta de información acerca de su biología, ecología y el estado actual de las poblaciones disjuntas de estas dos especies: *X. bolsonae* y *X. sanchezi*. *Xantusia sanchezi* es la especie con la distribución más meridional o sureña, incluida en el sur de Zacatecas y el centro de Jalisco. Esta especie fue descrita por Bezy y Flores-Villela (1999) en localidad de Moyahua, Zacatecas. En un inventario de herpetofauna simpátrica en el sitio donde se realizaba un estudio de ecología poblacional de *Xantusia sanchezi* la lagartija de noche de Sánchez, se encontraron un total de 24 especies simpátricas. De estos nueve se categorizaron como posible depredador de la especie (PDE) *Xantuisia sanchezi* tomando en cuenta la documentación de su comportamiento saurófago.

Introduction

Fourteen species are recognized in the North American lizard genus *Xantusia*, with six species occurring in Mexico. Most species are found in arid or semi-arid habitats. Two species of this genus, *X. bolsonae* and *X. sanchezi*, are categorized by the Mexican wildlife agency as "at risk of extinction" due in part to lack of information about the biology, ecology, and the current status of their disjunct populations: (SEMARNAT, 2002). *Xantusia sanchezi* is the species with the southernmost distribution, being known from the southern portion of the state Zacatecas and central Jalisco. It was described by Bezy and Flores-Villela (1999) from the locality of Moyahua, Zacatecas.

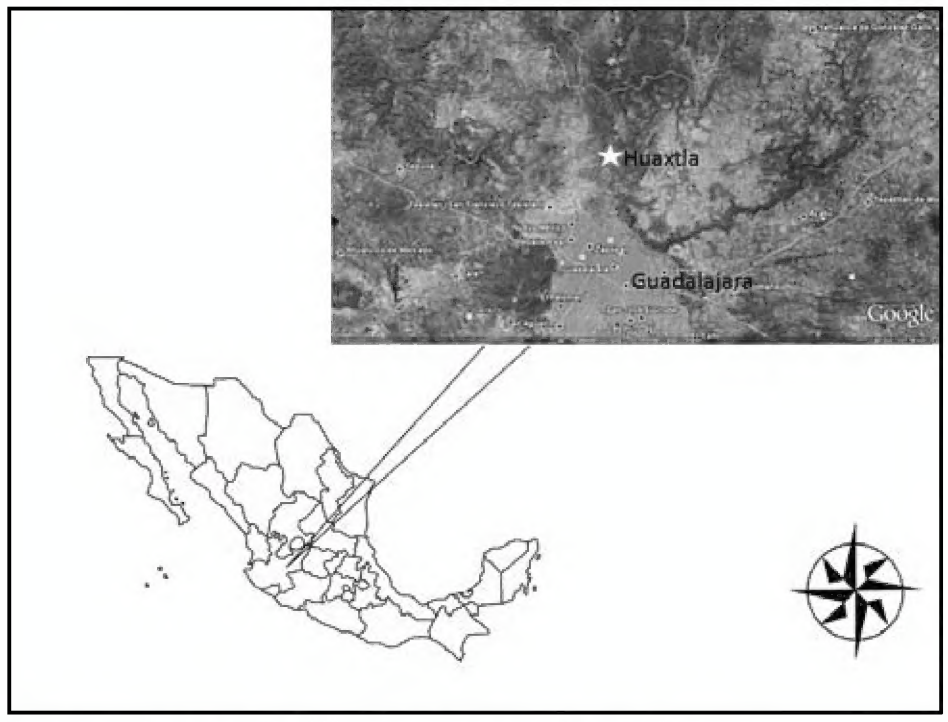


A specimen of *Xantusia sanchezi* close to its crevice. Photograph by Daniel Cruz-Sáenz.

To increase our knowledge of the species, we conducted a population survey and ecological analysis. Parallel to this we surveyed for herpetofauna sympatric with *X. sanchezi*. Documenting sympatric species is important parameter, as this allows pinpointing those species that could be potential predators or competitors. The only case of predation on *Xantusia* that we could find in the literature was for *Xantusia vigilis* by a larger lizard, *Sceloporus magister* (Perkins et al., 1997).

Study site

Huaxtla is located in northern Jalisco, 1458 meters above sea level. Within the municipality of Zapopan and located 20 km northwest of the metropolitan area of Guadalajara, this site is



Location of study site: Huaxtla, Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico.

accessed by the Federal Highway # 123 to Colotlán. The mountains here form part of the Sierra de San Esteban. Dominant vegetation is *bosque de encino-pino* (oak-pine forest), with some patches of *bosque tropical caducifolio* (tropical deciduous forest) on a few slopes and in ravines.

Material and Methods

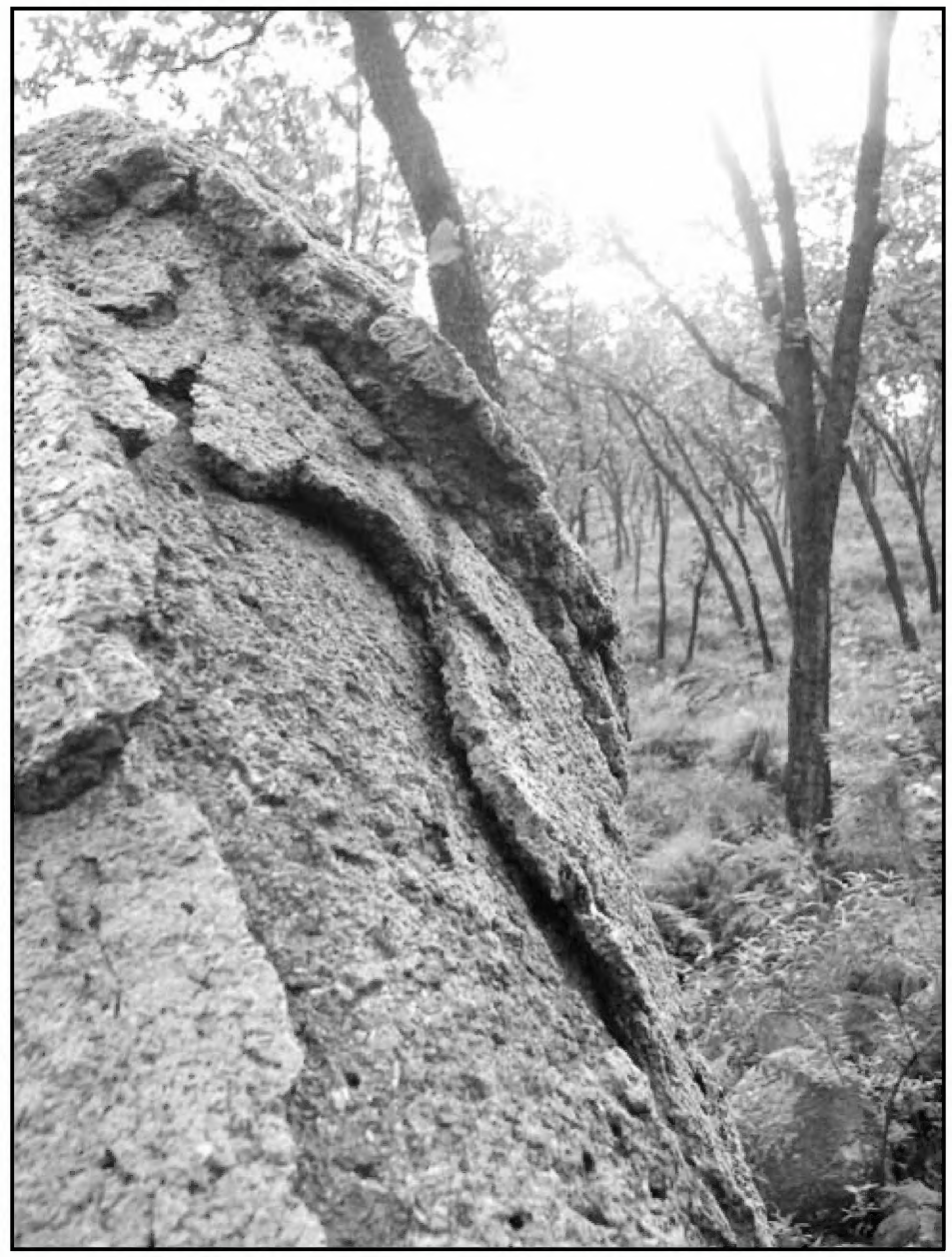
This list of sympatric species of amphibians and reptiles was obtained during a population study of *Xantusia sanchezi* conducted by Cruz-Sáenz et al. (2008) and in more recent sampling. Intensive sampling was conducted within an area of 1.5 ha to discover the sympatric herpetofauna; searching was done in feasible places such as under rocks, in crevices, trees, litter, etc.

Scientific and common names were taken from Liner and Casas-Andreu (2008).

Results

Twenty-four species of amphibians and reptiles have been identified to date. The amphibians comprise 6 anuran species belonging to 5 families and 6 genera; 4 of the species are endemic to Mexico. The reptiles comprise 18 squamate species belonging to 8 families and 13 genera; 12 of the species are endemic to Mexico and 8 are given special conservation status by NOM-059-ECOL-2001 (SEMARNAT, 2002) (Table 1).

We found a number of sympatric species of herpetofauna that


Typical habitat for *Xantusia sanchezi* includes many rock crevices. Photograph by Daniel Cruz-Sáenz.

are potential predators of *Xantusia sanchezi*. Considering that these species are also rock dwellers and have been documented to prey on lizards, there is good reason to consider them as potential predators on night lizards.

We included in this list of possible predators phrynosomatids of the genus *Sceloporus*, which are diurnal. *Xantusia* is adapted morphologically and physiologically to nocturnal life but may be diurnal under certain conditions, as expressed by Bezy (1988), who mentions the possibility of diurnal activity in this group. Their elliptical pupils facilitate vision at night, but may serve the same purpose in dark crevices during day as well. Moreover, Perkins et al. (1997) documented predation on *Xantusia vigilis* by *Sceloporus magister*. Saurophagy has been documented in *Sceloporus* (e.g., Lazcano et al., 2006). All *Sceloporus* species present at the study site are of medium size

A panoramic view of the study site where *Xantusia sanchezi* can be found. Photograph by Daniel Cruz-Sáenz.

Table 1. Amphibian and reptile species sympatric with *Xantusia sanchezi*. Status codes based on protection categories from Norma Oficial Mexicana (SEMARNAT, 2002): A = Amenazada (Threatened); Pr = Protección Especial (Special Protection). Endemism codes: EM = Endemic to Mexico; NE = Not endemic to Mexico. Potential Predator Species (PPS) on night lizardsare shown by a solid black circle.

Species	Common name	Status	Endemism	PPS
Amphibians				
Ollotis occidentalis	Pine toad	-	EM	
Hyla arenicolor	Canyon treefrog	-	NE	
Hypopachus variolosus	Sheep frog	-	NE	
Craugastor augusti	Barking frog	-	NE	
Syrrhophus modestus	Blunt-toed chirping frog	-	EM	
Lithobates forreri	Forrer´s leopard frog	-	EM	
Reptiles				
Phyllodactylus lanei	Lane´s leaf-toed gecko	-	EM	
Ctenosaura pectinata	Western spiny-tailed iguana	A	EM	
Anolis nebulosus	Clouded anole	-	EM	
Sceloporus clarkii	Clark´s spiny lizard	A	NE	
Sceloporus horridus	Rough lizard	-	EM	●
Sceloporus melanorhinus	Black-nosed lizard	-	NE	●
Sceloporus torquatus	Torquate lizard	-	EM	●
Sceloporus uniformis	Yellow-backed spiny lizard	-	EM	●
Urosaurus bicarinatus	Tropical tree lizard	-	EM	
Plestiodon callicephalus	Mountain skink	-	NE	
Aspidoscelis communis	Giant whiptail	Pr	EM	
Hypsiglena torquata	Collar Nightsnake	Pr	NE	●
Coluber mentovarius	Neotropical whipsnake	A	EM	
Micruroides euryxanthus	Sonoran coralsnake	A	NE	●
Rhadinaea hesperia	Western graceful brownsnake	Pr	EM	●
Sonora michoacanensis	Michoacan ground snake	A	NE	
Trimorphodon biscutatus	Western lyresnake	-	NE	●
Trimorphodon tau	Mexican lyresnake	-	EM	●

(15–20 cm; Cruz-Sáenz et al., 2008) compared to *Xantusia sanchezi*. In certain situations (for instance, at the edges of crevices or even within them), these larger lizards might encounter the smaller *X. sanchezi*, giving rise to opportunities to consume them.

In a study of the autecology of *Xantusia h. henshawi*, Lee (1975) mentions the herpetofauna associated with that species, also listing potential predators and competitors for food items. As potential predators he includes snakes of the genera *Masticophis* (now *Coluber*), *Hypsiglena* and *Trimorphodon*.

In the case of *Hypsiglena torquata*, Pianka and Vitt (2003) suggest that this species of small nightsnake may depend on the tails of lizards such as *Coleonyx* or *Xantusia* for energy. However, during our sampling period all specimens found had complete tails. In a study on the feeding ecology of the desert nightsnake, *Hypsiglena torquata*, Rodríguez-Robles et al. (1999) show a small percentage of *Xantusia* as a food item in this species. This could be the case in our study area.

It has been documented that coral snakes mainly consume small snakes—blindsnakes, nightsnakes and other small colubrids like *Chilomeniscus cinctus* (Roze, 1996; Brennan and Holycross, 2006). There is a possibility that these small night lizards may be consumed by coral snakes.

Scott and McDiarmid (1984) document that the two species *Trimorphodon tau* and *T. biscutatus* are nocturnal, and feed primarily on lizards; Contreras-Lozano et al. (2007) report a female *Trimorphodon tau* eating a adult male *Sceloporus cyanogenys*, which is a rock dweller and of diurnal activity. Lemos-Espinal and Smith (2007) report that the diet of these snakes consists mainly of lizards of the genera *Sceloporus* and *Aspidoscelis*.

All *Xantusia sanchezi* sampled in our study were found in crevices, to which their flattened body is adapted. As mentioned by Cooper et al. (2000), crevices in rocks and other hard objects, as well as burrows in relatively hard soil, serve as refuges from predators in a wide variety of lizards. This would be the case for *Xantusia sanchezi*, but depending on the physical characteristics

of the crevices snakes would have a better chance of preying on this lizard than would mammals or birds.

Acknowledgments

We thank CONACYT for their supporting scholarship given to the main author (CONACYT-229132) and SEMARNAT for issuing a collecting permit Oficio Num, SGP/DGVS/ 06423/09. We also thank Eduardo Gudiño-Larios and Edgar Flores-Covarrubias for their participation in field work.

Literature Cited

Bezy, R. L. 1988. The natural history of the night lizards, family Xantusiidae. Pp. 1-12. *In*: H. F. De Lisle, P. R. Brown, B. Kaufman and B. N. McGurty, editors, Proceedings of the Conference on California Herpetology. Southwestern Herpetologists Society Special Publication 4.

Bezy, R. L., and O. A. Flores Villela. 1999. A new species of *Xantusia* (Squamata: Xantusiidae) from Zacatecas, Mexico. Herpetologica 55(2):174-184.

Brennan, T. C., and A. T. Holycross. 2006. A field guide to amphibians and reptiles in Arizona. Phoenix: Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Contreras-Lozano, J. A., D. Lazcano and A. J. Contreras-Balderas. 2007. *Sceloporus cyanogenys* (Blue Spiny Lizard). Predation. Herpetological Review 38(1):82-83.

Cooper, W. Jr., J. H. Van Wyk, P. Le F. N. Mouton, A. M. Al-Johany, J. A. Lemos-Espinal, M. A. Paulissen and M. Flowers. 2000. Lizard antipredatory behaviors preventing extraction from crevices. Herpetologica 56(3):394-401.

Cruz-Sáenz, D., E. Gudiño-Larios, C. D. Jimeno-Sevilla, R. López-Velázquez and J. Cortes-Aguilar. 2008. Guía de reptiles y anfibios de Arcediano. Comisión Estatal del Agua Jalisco.

Lazcano, D., J. A. Contreras-Lozano, A. J. Contreras-Balderas, G. Castañeda and C. de la Peña Garcia. 2006. *Sceloporus couchi* (Couch's Spiny Lizard). Saurophagy. Herpetological Review 37(2):227.

Lee, J. C. 1975. The autecology of *Xantusia henshawi henshawi* (Sauria: Xantusiidae). Transactions of the San Diego Society of Natural History 17(19):259-278.

Lemos-Espinal, J., and H. M. Smith. 2007. Anfibios y Reptiles del Estado de Coahuila, México / Amphibians and Reptiles of the State of Coahuila, Mexico. UNAM-CONABIO (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México / Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad).

Liner, E. A., and G. Casas-Andreu. 2008. Nombres estándar en Español en Ingles y nombres científicos de los anfibios y reptiles de México. / Standard Spanish, English and scientific names of amphibians and reptiles of Mexico. Second edition. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles Herpetological Circular 38.

Perkins, M., S. C. Adolph, S. Granite and W. Hein. 1997. *Xantusia vigilis* (Desert Night Lizard) and *Sceloporus magister* (Desert Spiny Lizard). Predation and diet. Herpetological Review 28(2):89.

Pianka, E. R., and L. J. Vitt. 2003. Lizards: Window to the evolution of diversity. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Rodríguez-Robles, J. A., D. G. Mulcahy and H. W. Greene. 1999. Feeding ecology of the desert nightsnake, *Hypsiglena torquata* (Colubridae). Copeia 1999(1):93-100.

Roze, J. A. 1996. Coral snakes of the Americas: Biology, identification, and venom. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company.

Scott, N. J., Jr., and R. W. McDiarmid. 1984. *Trimorphodon*. Cat. Amer. Amphib. Rept.: 352.1-352.2.

SEMARNAT (Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales). 2002. Norma Oficial Mexicana NOM-059-ECOL-2001. Protección ambiental—Especies nativas de México de flora y fauna silvestres—Categorías de riesgo y especificaciones para su inclusión, exclusión o cambio—Lista de especies en riesgo. Publicada el 6 de Marzo.

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 45(11):177-178, 2010

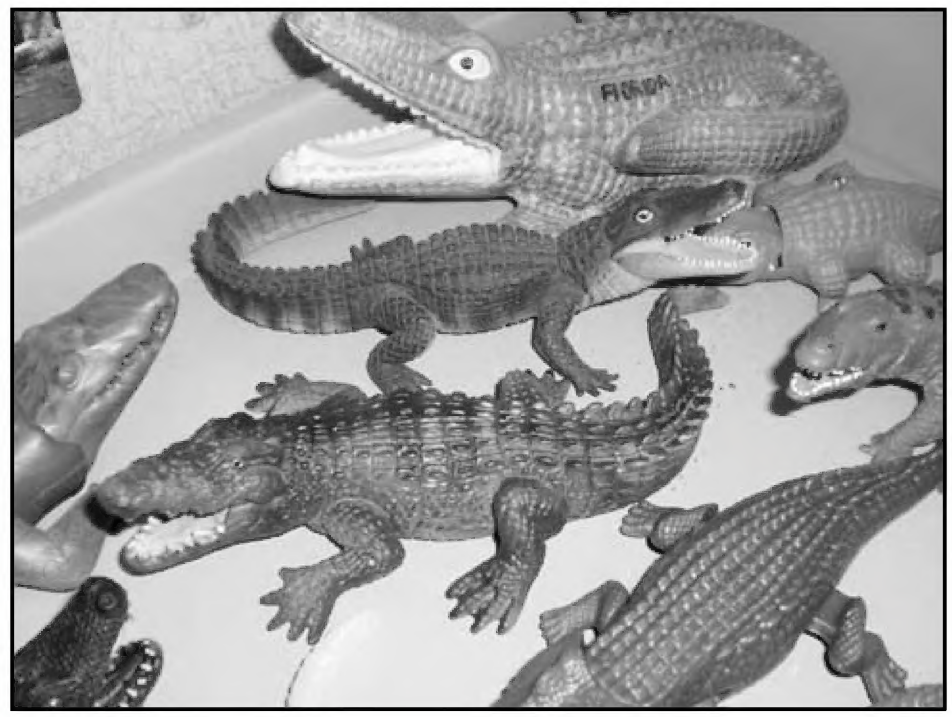
Alligator Farms in the Workplace: A Guide for Beginners

Gary Fogel
kordylus@juno.com

I never intended to create an alligator farm at work. It was just a manifestation of an empty shelf that took on a life of its own. I recently moved to new office surroundings out in Rosemont, Illinois, after my former workplace, along with my former bank job, disappeared like it was never there. Once a bank fails and goes under, it's gone, much like a submerged alligator in a swamp. The new owners closed up shop and moved many of us to the corporate office in beautiful Rosemont. With the move, came a new department, new job duties and a brand new spacious office space, completely empty, except for the usual computer and phone hardware found in your standard office cubicle area—a blank slate, so to speak. Any other furnishings would be provided by me, from two yellow plastic bins that had been filled, labeled and moved to the sixth floor of the new building that I would soon be permanently occupying. The bins were stuffed with equipment and things from my old workspace: desk mats, an adding machine, various desk holders and such, from a building that had been emptied and stripped clean of any hint of its old occupants. It has since been rented out, remodeled, and occupied by new tenants, who are unaware of the former employees before them. The circle of life goes on. My new work situation brings with it a new beginning.

After a few weeks of settling in, the task of personalization began. As office cubicles go, it was a nice sized area, with ample desktop and counter space, and with an overhead cabinet and metal shelf for storage. First the calendars went up, covering a good portion of the desk walls. You can never have enough varied and eye catching calendars in the workplace, as far as I'm concerned. Next, at this point, the plants were brought in. They never do well at home in the winter months, so they have a better shot of surviving if I bring them to work. Two large aloe plants, a succulent and a bromeliad rounded out the group. I had placed one of them, originally, on the shelf, but decided that it was too close to me, about two feet away. I did not like inhaling plant spores on a daily basis, so I moved it to the top of the cabinet with the others. This left an entire shelf area empty, as I had nothing to put on it. Any work-related papers or manuals must be locked up each night, so I could not keep anything on this shelf that pertained to the job, unless I wanted to keep moving it off the shelf every night. I decided to bring in some objects from home, but what?

Upon looking in my miscellaneous drawer at home, I noticed that I had a few different types of plastic alligators in my possession. I thought these would be suitable for the shelf for the time being and brought them in the next day. Little did I know what was about to unfold from this simple, random act of decoration.



For a few days I looked at the alligators and really didn't pay much attention to them. Before long, the wheels of my imagination began to grind. The magic of the alligator farm idea gradually grew, as if possessed with a life of its own. It still amazes me when an idea pops into my head out of nowhere. I guess that's part of the fun of the creative process. I began to put the mechanics in motion for the development of an alligator farm. Deciding what items might be utilized and what I would still need to gather up was the next step. Ideas never happen all at once, but rather happen in pieces, as in a building process. I had a few alligator postcards, but decided that I needed a few more to round out the wall area behind the shelf. I found a vintage alligator bumper sticker that would serve as the main focus of

the back wall, with various postcards surrounding it. As someone who likes to collect things, I don't need much of a reason for the process to magically start moving forward. I am always amazed when it starts, almost by accident, even though I had never planned it out, really. Before you know it, I started to actively seek out other plastic alligators and related objects.

Of course, the quickest way to find anything to satisfy a collecting frenzy is the internet, specifically eBay,. This took another few weeks until I managed to acquire an adequate supply of "alligators" for the "farm." The variation available is staggering, so I decided to keep it down to the plastic or realistic variety, with an occasional pair of salt & pepper shakers or

ceramic alligators. They had to be of a similar size, the largest not exceeding ten inches. After a few days of looking at what was on the shelf so far, I decided it needed more of a farm look to it. The last item needed was a good fence to keep all the alligators and crocodiles from "escaping." A simple brown plastic farm or cowboy fence from any kid's childhood days was what I was seeking, and it had to be inexpensive as well. I wasn't going to spend large amounts of money on this impulsive bit of redecoration. I eventually found several pieces of brown plastic farm fence that would work quite well with my vision of the perfect alligator farm.

I made sure that I shopped frugally, buying only the items that were within my alligator farm budget. Other variations could have been an alligator farm completely of salt and pepper shakers, or jewelry. The ideas are limited only by one's imagination of what one wants to achieve. If you are thinking of starting your own farm, keep this in mind when purchasing items; it's best to not get too much of a variety going, for fear that it might look like your local Goodwill store on your desktop. The farm area in question is roughly twelve inches by twenty-eight inches and is quite a conversation piece. The alligator and crocodile count is 37 at the moment. I'm not actively seeking new ones, but will always accommodate a stray if one shows up and can be utilized into the group.

The farm also has quite a calming effect when things get stressful at work. Taking a few minutes to survey the alligator farm is actually quite a relaxing experience that can make even the most hectic day fun and enjoyable. It may even help to lower your blood pressure. I'll take an alligator farm over a heart attack any day of the week!

In writing this article, I hope to inspire some of you to create your own personalized alligator farms at work or at home. After all, I never intended to deliberately create and display this sideshow attraction at work. It just evolved out of an active imagination and a need to make the workspace a little more like home. I wanted to show by example what is possible if you just get a little inventive with your interests and hobbies. Who knows? I'm sure yours might even turn out more spectacular, with just a little thought and some good old fashioned American ingenuity!

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 45(10):179-182, 2010

What You Missed at the October Meeting

John Archer
j-archer@sbcglobal.net

You may have the wrong impression of me from reading these missives. My consistent praise for our speakers and my occasional complaints about the inadequate feelings that they often generate in me might lead one to believe that I'm a relatively shy, self-effacing individual who wonders what he's done with his life that's worthwhile. You'd be wrong. Although I'm extremely humble considering the number of things I've accomplished in my life, my good looks, and my considerable intellect, I normally think pretty well of myself and therefore I look with benign benevolence upon my fellow humans that sometimes even rise to my level. I'm not easily intimidated and I'm certainly not insecure. Which brings us to Dr. Karen Eckert. For nearly a year that name has been cropping up in conversations around your society as a highly desirable speaker. "One of the world's experts on sea turtles." "World famous." "Must-have presenter." "Degrees with honors." "Awards from lots and lots of places."

Photograph of Dr. Karen Eckert by Dick Buchholz.

Dr. Karen Eckert, our October speaker, is the executive director of WIDECAST, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network. She received a bachelor's degree in biology with highest honors from Principia College in 1980, and later a certificate in global policy studies (1987) and a doctorate in zoology (1988) from the University of Georgia. She has been inducted into the "Global 500 Roll of Honour for Environmental Achievement" by the United Nations in 1994. UNEP has characterized her as "one of the most important figures in conservation and grassroots community empowerment in the field of endangered species in the Wider Caribbean Region." In 1996 she was among the first cohort of Pew Fellows in Marine Conservation, a prestigious three-year fellowship that specifically recognized her efforts to restore depleted sea turtle populations and to promote sustainable coexistence between Caribbean people and their marine resources. She received the 2003 ChevronTexaco Conservation Award for "providing the world with a unique model that shows how people and marine life are not only able to coexist, but to flourish." She was recently nominated for the Indianapolis Prize in 2010 for her efforts "to inspire local and global communities and to celebrate, protect and preserve our natural world through conservation, education and research."

In addition to her work with WIDECAST, Dr. Eckert's personal research has taken her throughout the western Atlantic, and into the Mediterranean Sea, eastern tropical Pacific, and Southeast Asia. She is a valued consultant to many governments and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. She has published more than 100 scientific and general interest articles, technical manuals, and policy documents. Her most recent books, *Sea Turtles: An Ecological Guide* (Gulko and Eckert, 2004) and *Turning the Tide: Exploitation, Trade and Management of Marine Turtles in the Lesser Antilles, Central America, Colombia and Venezuela* (Bräutigam and Eckert, 2006) are available from Mutual Publishing (Honolulu, USA) and TRAFFIC International (Cambridge, UK), respectively.

She is a member of the U.S. Pacific and the Atlantic/Caribbean Sea Turtle Recovery Teams, and the Marine Turtle Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. She served as Senior Editor of the *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, a scholarly bilingual publication with subscribers in more than 100 nations, for ten years (1988-1997), and is now a member of the editorial board.

Now, I'm not one to prejudge individuals, but as I researched Dr. Eckert and heard more about her work, I began to draw a picture of her as a relatively serious, even severe, rather pompous, self-centered academic who would look upon her time with us as a blessing delivered upon your society by the gods. I don't often think this way and I'm not quite sure why I did this time. Our speakers are normally easy people to be around and basically just nice, but there was just something about this Dr. Eckert's bio that lead me to form a less-than-fun picture of her and even intimidate me a little.

Boy was I wrong. I was setting up for the meeting when I was introduced to Dr. Eckert and before she said a word I knew I'd drawn the wrong conclusions. She has a stylish look and an open face that invites you to be her friend. She had talked for five hours that morning in Miami, flown to Chicago, and after a quick trip to her hotel, despite a long day and nothing to eat since breakfast, looked ready and eager to speak to us. She is gracious and friendly and as opposite of my imaginings as possible. An accomplished speaker, she had the audience in her hand after a quick introduction and a brief ad-lib about lighting. As have many of our speakers, she fascinated me with her smooth presentation while still engaging me with her winning personality. Her topic was "Dinosaurs Among Us: Saving the Last Sea Turtles."

She began with a quick overview of sea turtles. Six of the seven extant species of sea turtles nest in the greater Caribbean area for which Dr. Eckert assumes responsibility. The seventh, the flatback sea turtle (*Natator depressus*), is endemic to the waters of Australia. Sea turtles have existed for at least 112 million years, and the largest of the three most common turtles in the Caribbean has existed for 90 million years. The leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) is the world's largest living reptile

Female leatherbacks (*Dermochelys coriacea*) don't weigh as much as the males, but they're still pretty big. ©WIDECAST

and Karen threw down a gauntlet to saltwater crocodile enthusiasts who might challenge that. At over two thousand pounds, it is certainly " . . . a creature of superlatives." Leatherbacks have the widest biogeographic distribution, the longest migration, and the deepest dive of all reptiles. They range from 71°N to 47°S and migrate across both the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. The leatherback is the only large marine animal that crosses the equator in its migration. Variations from the standard turtle physiology such as a soft, pliable shell and ribs not fused to the carapace allow it to dive to 4000 feet and back in only 36 minutes. The inside of its mouth looks like something from a horror movie but is well adapted for the task of feeding on giant jellyfish. Even today many leatherbacks are hunted and killed for their oil.

Dr. Eckert said that this is the last thing a jellyfish sees on its way down the throat of a leatherback.. ©WIDECAST

Hawksbills (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), while still large turtles, are only about one-tenth the size of leatherbacks.. ©WIDECAST

Next she spoke about the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), a sea turtle that shares many of the same threats of the other sea turtles plus another. The jewelry industry has had a devastating effect on the populations of hawksbill. From 1970 to 1989 over a quarter-million hawksbills were shipped from the Caribbean just to Japan! In the last twenty years, since that traffic was stopped, the hawksbill has made a significant recovery. This turtle is the only known obligate spongivore on the planet, grazing coral reefs and ingesting sponges that, along with algae, grow faster than the coral. When the populations of hawksbills decline the populations of sponges increase. That drastically and negatively affects the health of the corals. The turtles can reach 200 pounds and can crawl up beaches to nest in the coastal vegetation. They are very fast and very shy, making them difficult to study.

Some neat pictures of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) served as an opening for Karen's description of that species. A ray of sun illuminated the beautifully patterned shell of a turtle as it

Now mostly stopped, the taking of hawksbills for jewelry was once a major factor in the turtles' decline. ©WIDECAST

Baby turtles are all cute, but this baby green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) is definitely one of the cutest. ©WIDECAST

swam above the deep green of the plants it feeds upon. That diet actually turns the flesh of the turtle green, which is what gave them their name. The babies are really photogenic with their countershading of black tops and white bottoms. Like the hawksbills, the babies spend their first years in floating seaweed and after about ten years return to the continental shelf and live their adult lives among the grasses and corals. Nesting beaches of the green turtle are covered with distinctive craters three feet deep and four feet wide. Early sailors reported rafts of green turtles so vast that it was impossible to drag nets and difficult to maneuver ships. Those days are not likely to return.

But while populations of all sea turtles are under threat, there is good news, and Karen's speech moved onto to the threats, the solutions, and the results. WIDECAST is a United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) partner tasked with reversing the declining trend in Caribbean sea turtles. Over the last two hundred years, the Caribbean turtle populations have declined 85–95% due to chronically unsustainable use and trade, open access fisheries, high levels of illegal take, wasteful bycatch, pollution, and high-density coastal development. Dr. Eckert made the point that the solutions lie not in managing the turtles but in managing people. WIDECAST works with governments and NGOs to coordinate interstate and intrastate actions that are supported by local solutions. The organization has trained over 1,000 Caribbean biologists, managers, protected areas' staff, hoteliers, fishermen, educators, tour guides,

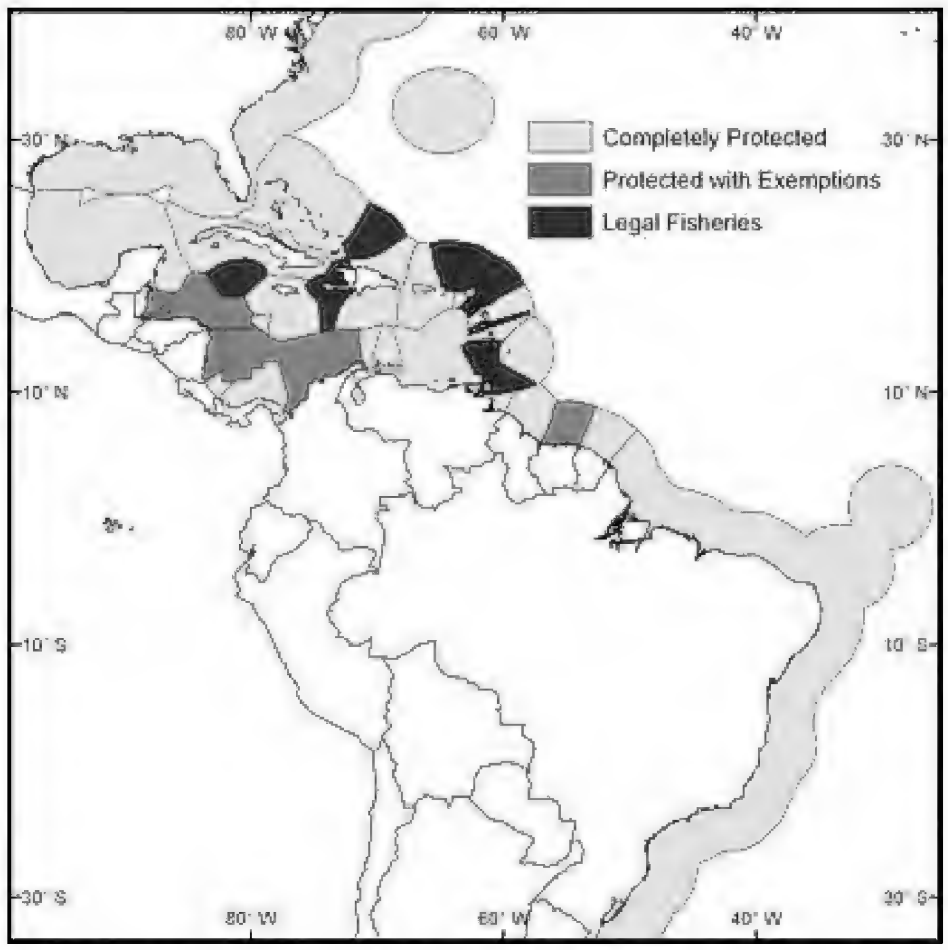
All early activity in the New World tropics—exploration, colonization, buccaneering, and even the maneuverings of naval squadrons—was in some way or degree dependent on turtles. ©WIDECAST

Engaging locals, especially the young, has the greatest success in making progress towards saving the turtles. ©WIDECAST

veterinarians, GIS specialists, law enforcement officers, community leaders and others in solutions varying from clinical care for sick and injured turtles to monitoring trade in sea turtle products.

As she flipped through the slides during this portion of the talk the pictures showed sea turtles engulfed in gill nets (and she spared us the worst), hotel lights flooding beaches, classes for school children, and signs posted highlighting the turtles' plight throughout the Caribbean. But always she showed pictures of people, and mostly local people. To my awe and admiration she described a tactic she used to stop the turtle bycatch of Trinidad fisherman. In a rented bus she drove over the island and transported every fisherman on the island to a hotel. For three days she paid them to brainstorm solutions to the turtle problem. They came up with regulatory solutions, gear solutions, timing solutions, and others, but in the end, the fishermen themselves decided that they would simply stop fishing off the nesting beaches. Not a solution suggested or imposed by an outsider, but certainly the most effective solution. Karen wanted to stress that the ultimate solutions are locally grown solutions.

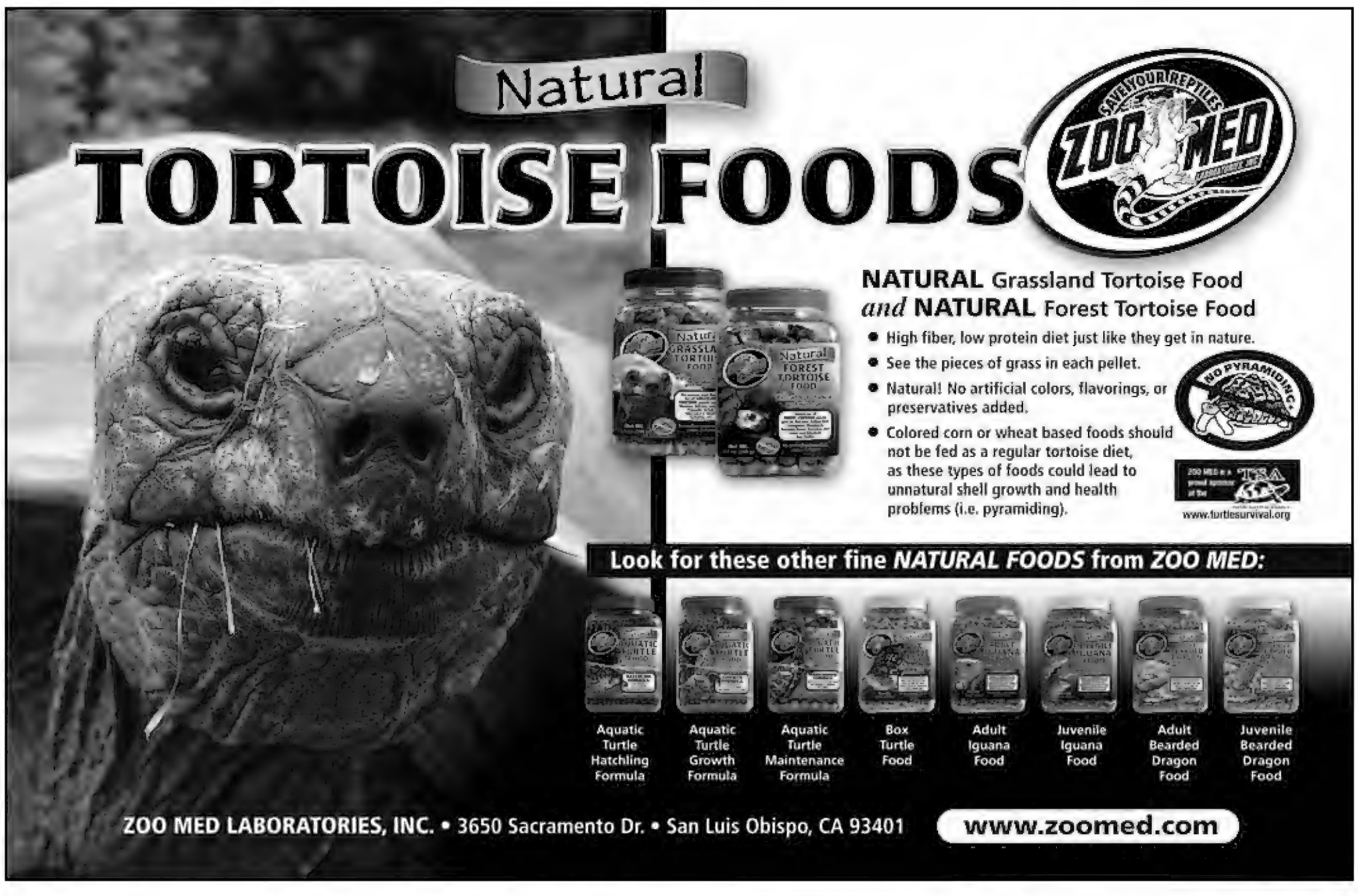
Lastly she touted the growth of her local monitoring programs. From a handful of monitoring projects run by mostly developed countries twenty-five years ago there are now dozens throughout the Caribbean maintained through local community involvement. From all these efforts Dr. Eckert can point to major populations of all six species of sea turtles that are growing. As I listened again to her talk, I realized that most of the tactics are the same tactics that nearly every conservation movement is trying to use. Over and over you hear of educating school children and tourist, seeking local input and solutions, coordinating regulations and reality. WIDECAST is doing this over a huge area covering 43 countries, many different political and economic regimes, animals that migrate long distances through many different regulatory bodies, and dealing with locals involved in everything from the hotel industry to law enforcement. WIDECAST is a partner of UNEP but is a 501(c)3 corporation which receives all of its funding from private sources and some grants. Virtually all of its funding comes in increments of less than $5000, and Karen admits that



There are still some black areas on this chart showing the status of regulations of the 43 countries that WIDECAST works with in the Caribbean. Because of the extensive movement of sea turtles, any unprotected areas represent huge threats to their existance. WIDECAST continues to work with countries to protect all of the waters for turtles.

fund-raising is one of her least favorite activities. But she's good at it. One can tell because of the enthusiasm that she generates while talking about her subject and the success she's demonstrated with WIDECAST. She admits that her strength and her passion lie in the coordinating efforts involved with all of the volunteers that propel WIDECAST to its success. You can find more about WIDECAST at www.WIDECAST.org. Interestingly enough, it's really hard to find anything about Karen Eckert on that site, which speaks volumes about her humility despite the accolades she's earned. The site does have the coolest banner I've seen. Run your cursor over it. It's addictive.

What Dr. Eckert and WIDECAST represent is a successful conservation movement. They're not finished, but certainly the organization, guided by Karen, is moving in the right direction and will continue to improve the sea turtles' plight. The lessons learned from her efforts can be applied to many of the threatened species around the world, and while most of our threatened animals are not as charismatic as sea turtles, Karen's demonstrated that one person with a lot of intelligence, drive, and desire can make a difference. We thank her for taking the time to speak to us and maybe some of us will apply the lessons learned to our own efforts. But it's going to be really hard to come close to Dr. Eckert's accomplishments. All that, and she's a really nice person. I've got to quit making those prejudgments.


Natural
TORTOISE FOODS
SAVE YOUR REPTILES
ZOO MED
NATURAL Grassland Tortoise Food
and NATURAL Forest Tortoise Food
High fiber, low protein diet just like they get in nature.
See the pieces of grass in each pellet.
Natural! No artificial colors, flavorings, or preservatives added.
Colored corn or wheat based foods should not be fed as a regular tortoise diet, as these types of foods could lead to unnatural shell growth and health problems (i.e. pyramiding).
NO PYRAMIDING
www.turtlesurvival.org
Look for these other fine NATURAL FOODS from ZOO MED:
Aquatic Turtle Hatchling Formula
Aquatic Turtle Growth Formula
Aquatic Turtle Maintenance Formula
Box Turtle Food
Adult Iguana Food
Juvenile Iguana Food
Adult Bearded Dragon Food
Juvenile Bearded Dragon Food
ZOO MED LABORATORIES, INC. • 3650 Sacramento Dr. • San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.zoomed.com

Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, October 15, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 P.M. at the Schaumburg Public Library. All board members were present.

Officers' Reports

Recording Secretary: Cindy Rampacek read the minutes from the September 17 board meeting, corrections were made, and the minutes were accepted..

Treasurer: The financial report was presented, discussed and accepted.

Membership Secretary: Mike Dloogatch read a list of memberships expiring this month. Membership stands at approximately 525.

Corresponding secretary: Deb Krohn has been speaking with a lady wanted to place us in her will for her animals. A short discussion ensued.

Publications Secretary: Aaron LaForge and Jason Hood will be looking at photo gallery options for the ReptileFest website.

Sergeant-at-arms: The attendance at the September meeting was 44.

Committee Reports

Shows:
• Notebaert, October 27, 3:30 P.M. John Archer, Dick Buchholz, Cindy Rampacek and Linda Malawy volunteered to bring animals to a teacher education program in the afternoon prior to the CHS meeting..
• Garfield Park Conservatory, October 30, 12:00 – 3:00 P.M.
• Snake Day, Milwaukee Public Museum, November 6.
• SEWERFest, November 14.
Bob Bavirsha, Dick Buchholz and Steve Sullivan represented the CHS at the Meet the Creek event in Brookfield, September 18. The show went well despite the rain.

Old Business

Awards: The awards will be ready in time for the November meeting, but we will present them at the December holiday meeting.

Book sales: Linda Malawy will take charge of inventorying and pricing and making a list available to our membership.

New Business

Proposed changes to the Illinois Dangerous Animal Act have been circulating on the Internet. Jason did some research and was told that if there was not a sponsor or bill number, it is not something currently on the table. More than likely someone wrote it and is hoping it gets picked up.

Addresses for officers: John collected names and addresses for the corporation papers

Round Table

Cindy got a blood python from Rich Crowley and a chondro from Terry Phillip at NARBC.

Lawrence Huddleston will be selling chips, candy and soda at the general meetings.

Deb offered her home for December board meeting.

Jessica almost sold her big snake painting for a thousand bucks.

Rick is still chairing 'Fest, despite facing more back surgery.

Linda mentioned that her son Michael got nailed in the foot by an Arizona bark scorpion in his house in Arizona. She shared that his foot was numb, prickly and it feels like someone is stabbing you with glass non-stop.

Mike Scott brought a sample from a lady who makes patches. This inspired a discussion on patches.

Nancy again mentioned her checkered garter snake babies. She had no clue that the albino female was gravid, or that the male was heterozygous.

Jason was bummed that only about 3 people showed to his talk at NARBC. He also praised Gavin Brink's artistic display at that show.

Aaron let everyone know that he has an excess of cork bark available.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by recording secretary Cindy Rampacek

Advertisements

For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 12921 SW 1st Rd, Ste 107-434, Jonesville, FL 32669, 352-472-9189, E-mail: GrmtRodent@aol.com.

For sale: from **The Mouse Factory**, producing superior quality, frozen feeder mice and rats. Our mice and rats are vacuum-packed to greatly extend freezer life by reducing freezer burning and preserving vitamin and nutrient content. We feed our colony a nutrtionally balanced diet of rodent chow, formulated especially for us, and four types of natural whole grains and seeds. For a complete price list please visit our web site, www.themousefactory.com. We accept all major credit cards, PayPal or money orders. Call us **toll-free** (800) 720-0076 or send us an e-mail at info@themousefactory.com. Write us at PO Box 85, Alpine TX 79831.

For sale: **high quality frozen feeders**. Over a decade of production and supply. Seven sizes of mice availabe: small newborn pinks up to jumbo adults. Prices start at $25 per 100. Feeders are separate in the resealable bag, not frozen together. Low shipping rates. Free price list. Kelly Haller, 4236 SE 25th Street, Topeka KS 66605, (913) 234-3358 evenings and weekends.

For sale: Rats—live or frozen. I breed rats for my collection of boas so only top quality lab chow and care will do, I'm now offering surplus animals for sale. Located in far south suburbs of Chicago. Only orders of 20 or more please, no large rats will be available. For current availability and prices, please e-mail Steve at smuys@sbcglobal.net.

For sale: Australian books. *Small Creatures of the Australian Wilderness* by Dr. A. J. Press with photos by Leo Meier, 1984, 264 large (10" × 12½") pp., color photos (some full and double page) on almost every page; features excellent photos of invertebrates, mammals, birds, and reptiles (including lace monitor, southern angle-headed and ornate dragons, blotched blue-tongue, and Arafura file snake) and amphibians, bookplate of former owner, hardbound, $25; *Snakes of South-east Queensland* by Patrick Couper and Andrew Amey, 2007, 68 pp., one or two color photos of each species, pocket-size book, published by Queensland Museum, softbound, $16; *Creatures of the Night* by Mary Hoban, 1997, 40 pp, numerous fine color photos, includes invertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles (diamond python, Arafura file snake, and northern velvet gecko), and amphibians, includes photos of Australian postal stamps of same animals, hardbound, $10; *Australian Snakes and Lizards*, part of Australian Wildlife Series, 1981, 51 pp., many good color photos, covers all 5 of Australia's lizard families plus snakes, including the taipan and death adder, hardbound, $22. Books in excellent condition. $3 postage and handling for orders under $25, free for orders $25 or more. William Turner, 7395 S. Downing Circle W.; Centennial, CO 80122. Telephone (303) 795-5128; e-mail: toursbyturner@aol.com.

For sale: Trophy quality jungle carpet, diamond-jungle, and jaguar carpet pythons. Website: moreliatrophyclub.com E-mail: junglejohn@tds.net.

Herp tours: **Costa Rica herping adventures**. Join a small group of fellow herpers for 7 herp-filled days. We find all types of herps, mammals, birds,and insects, but our target is snakes. We average 52 per trip, and this is our 10th year doing it. If you would like to enjoy finding herps in the wild and sleep in a bed at night with air-conditioning, hot water and only unpack your suitcase once, instead of daily, then this is the place to do it. Go to our web-site http://hiss-n-things.com and read the highlights of our trips. Read the statistics of each trip and visit the link showing photos of the 40 different species we have found along the way. E-mail at jim.kavney@gmail.com or call Jim Kavney 305 664-2881

Herp tours: **The Ultimate Bushmaster Experience**: five days in and out one of the world's hotspots, the Atlantic Rainforest in Brazil, with safety and confort, and also some work in a captive breeding center, guided by a specialist in the genus *Lachesis*. Groups of six people. Please contact Rod Souza, M.D lachesisbrasil@hotmail.com

Herp tours: The beautiful Amazon! Costa Rica from the Atlantic to the Pacific! Esquinas Rainforest Lodge, the Osa Peninsula, Santa Rosa National Park, and a host of other great places to find herps and relax. Remember, you get what you pay for, so go with the best! GreenTracks, Inc. offers the finest from wildlife tours to adventure travel, led by internationally acclaimed herpers and naturalists. Visit our website <http://www.greentracks.com> or call (800) 892-1035, E-mail: info@greentracks.com

Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members—$2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (773) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail: MADadder0@aol.com

News and Announcements

FUNDING FOR PRAIRIE RESEARCH

Prairie Biotic Research (PBR) is an all-volunteer nonprofit that fosters basic biotic research in prairies and savannas. Through our competitive Small Grants Program, PBR funds grants up to $1000 to individuals for the study of any grassland taxon anywhere in the USA. We support both natural history and experimental science. We are especially eager to support independent researchers (those lacking institutional support), but anyone may apply. Since 2002, we've awarded 100 grants worth $94,849 to people in 24 states. Many of these grants supported graduate student research.

In 2011, we'll fund at least 12 grants of up to $1000 each with the donations we have received, including some restricted by donors to support research in the Upper Midwest. To apply for a grant, visit our website (prairiebioticresearch.org) to learn more, to download our proposal form, instructions, and a sample researcher agreement form that winners of this competition must sign. Check out the history and overview files in the Small Grants section of the website to see what sorts of proposals have won funding in the past. Review the reports submitted by researchers of past years. We must receive your proposal through the mail before January 7, 2011.

ReptileFest 2011, April 9, 10

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, November 24, at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Cannon Drive and Fullerton Parkway, in Chicago. This meeting will include the annual election of officers and members-at-large of the CHS Board of Directors. And we'll have an interesting program as well. **Jason Hood** will speak about "Peru—Trip of a Lifetime." We all know that when it comes to herping it is better to be lucky than it is to be good. In this talk Jason will go over his short trip to the Peruvian Amazon and the lucky finds made while there. There will be pictures galore in this travelog of fantastic finds in the beautiful Amazon Basin and some amazing views of Incan ruins high in the mountains.

The December 29 meeting will be a holiday party. The CHS will provide soft drinks and snacks. If you would like to bring something edible to share with the group, you are invited to do so. If you would like to bring an animal to show off to the group, you are encouraged to do that as well. This will be a chance to socialize all evening and get to know your fellow members a little better.

The regular monthly meetings of the Chicago Herpetological Society take place at Chicago's newest museum—the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**. This beautiful building is at Fullerton Parkway and Cannon Drive, directly across Fullerton from the Lincoln Park Zoo. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 P.M. through 9:30 P.M. Parking is free on Cannon Drive. Many CTA bus routes are within walking distance.

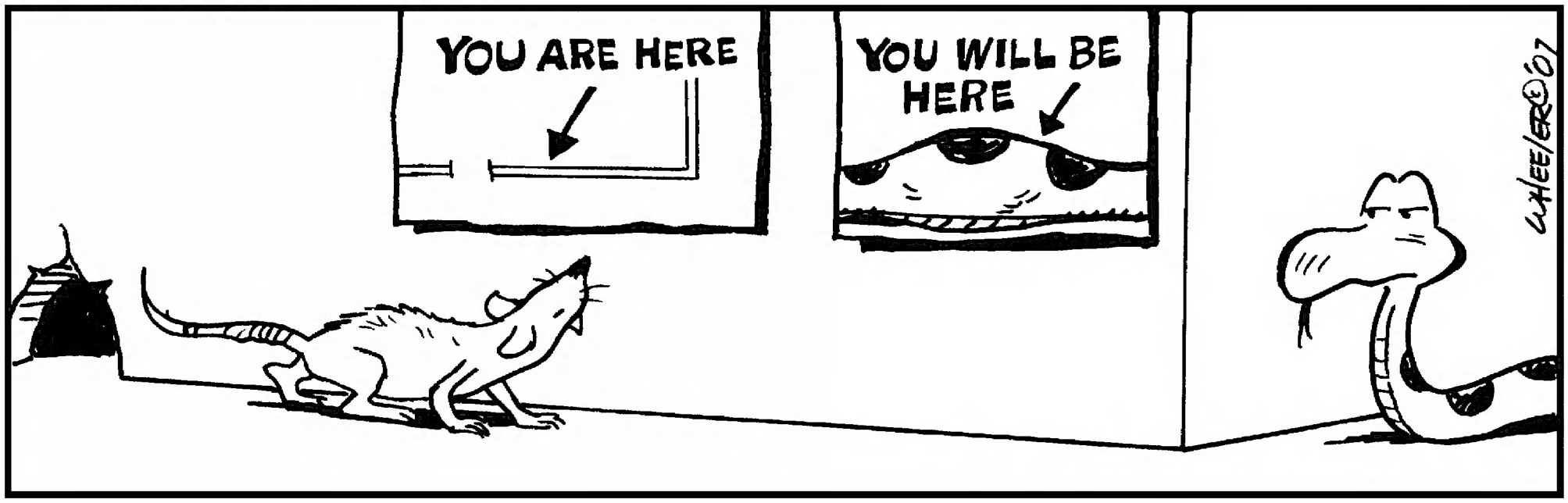
Board of Directors Meeting

Are you interested in how the decisions are made that determine how the Chicago Herpetological Society runs? And would you like to have input into those decisions? If so, mark your calendar for the next board meeting, to be held at 7:30 P.M., December 17, at the home of Deb Krohn in Grayslake. If you wish to attend, please call Deb at (847) 281-7124.

The Chicago Turtle Club

The monthly meetings of the Chicago Turtle Club are informal; questions, children and animals are welcome. Meetings normally take place at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. Parking is free. For more info visit the CTC website: http://chicagoturtle.org/.

THE ADVENTURES OF SPOT



Periodicals Postage
Paid at Chicago IL

CHICAGO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Affiliated with the Chicago Academy of Sciences

2430 North Cannon Drive • Chicago, Illinois 60614